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DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND SOCIAL SECURITY
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Borough of Great Torrington

ANNUAL REPORT

of the

Medical Officer of Health

and the

Borough Surveyor and Public Health Inspector

For the Year ending
31st December, 1970

Public Health Staff.

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Building Surveyor and Clerk of Works:

S. WOOD, A.I.C.W.

Committees:

HOUSING, SANITARY, BUILDING and IMPROVEMENTS, SPECIAL SEWERAGE.

Council Offices,
6, Halsdon Terrace,
Great Torrington.

Mr. Mayor, Aldermen and Councillors,

We have pleasure in submitting our report for the year ending 31st December, 1970.

During the year the general health of the Borough was very good. There was no major epidemic apart from the influenza outbreak, which started in December 1969, and continued into the early months of 1970.

The corrected birth rate was 15.9 per 1,000 population: that for the whole of England and Wales was 16.0.

The corrected death rate was 10.9 per 1,000 population: the figure for the whole of England and Wales was 11.7.

We are,

Yours faithfully,

C. F. R. BRIGGS,
Medical Officer of Health.

P. F. R. E. SYMONS,
Public Health Inspector and Surveyor.

Borough of Great Torrington

1970

INDUSTRIES AND OCCUPATIONS.

Abattoir. Agriculture. Agricultural Engineering.
Cattle Breeding Centre. Children's Clothing.
Electrical Components. Glassware. Glove Making.
Milk Processing. Plasticware.

GENERAL STATISTICS.

Area (statute acres)	3,592
Mid-year Population (official estimate)	3,200
Number of Inhabited Houses	1,266
(Number of Council-owned Houses)	375
Rateable Value	£119,961
Product of New Penny Rate	£1,142

VITAL STATISTICS.

Year	Mid-year Population	Corrected Birth Rate	Corrected Death Rate
1970	3,200	15.9	10.9
1969	3,080	20.5	10.7
1968	3,010	19.4	9.1
1967	2,920	19.5	9.8
1966	2,880	14.9	14.4

VITAL

		GREAT TORRINGTON			England and Wales (Total)
		Males	Females	Total	
Estimated mid-year home population.		—	—	3,200	48,987,700
Live births	Total	20	23	43	784,482
	Legitimate	19	19	38	719,738
	Illegitimate	1	4	5	64,744
Stillbirths	Total	1	—	1	10,341
	Legitimate	1	—	1	9,297
	Illegitimate	—	—	—	1,044
Total live and still births	Total	21	23	44	794,823
	Legitimate	20	19	39	729,035
	Illegitimate	1	4	5	65,788
Deaths of infants					
under 1 year of age	Total	1	—	1	14,269
	Legitimate	1	—	1	12,592
	Illegitimate	—	—	—	1,677
under 4 weeks of age	Total	1	—	1	9,663
	Legitimate	1	—	1	8,548
	Illegitimate	—	—	—	1,115
under 1 week of age	Total	1	—	1	8,328
	Legitimate	1	—	1	7,343
	Illegitimate	—	—	—	985
Deaths—all ages		27	31	58	575,208

STATISTICS

	Great Torrington	England and Wales
	—	—
Live birth rates, etc.		
Livebirths per 1,000 home population (crude rate)	13.4	16.0
Area comparability factor	1.19	1.00
Local adjusted rate	15.9	16.0
Ratio of local adjusted rate to national rate	1.00	1.00
Illegitimate live births as percentage of all live births	12	8
Stillbirth rate		
Stillbirths per 1,000 total live and still births	23	13
Infant mortality rates		
Deaths under 1 year per 1,000 live births	23	18
Deaths of legitimate infants under 1 year per 1,000 legitimate live births	26	17
Deaths of illegitimate infants 1 year per 1,000 illegitimate live births	—	26
Neonatal mortality rate		
Deaths under 4 weeks per 1,000 live births	23	12
Early neonatal mortality rate		
Deaths under 1 week per 1,000 total live births	23	11
Perinatal mortality rate		
Stillbirths and deaths under 1 week combined, per 1,000 total live and still births	45	23
Deaths rates, etc.—all ages		
Deaths per 1,000 home population (crude rate)	18.1	11.7
Area comparability factor	.60	1.00
Local adjusted rate	10.9	11.7
Ratio of local adjusted rate to national rate	.93	1.00

NUMBER OF DEATHS BY CAUS

	Cause of Death	Sex	Tota All Ag
B5	Tuberculosis of Respiratory System	M	1
		F	—
B19(3)	Malignant Neoplasm, Stomach	M	2
		F	—
B19(4)	Malignant Neoplasm, Intestine	M	1
		F	2
B19(6)	Malignant Neoplasm, Lung, Bronchus	M	1
		F	—
B19(7)	Malignant Neoplasm, Breast	M	—
		F	1
B19(9)	Malignant Neoplasm, Prostate	M	1
B19(11)	Other Malignant Neoplasms	M	—
		F	2
B23	Anaemias	M	—
		F	1
B46(3)	Mental Disorders	M	—
		F	1
B46(5)	Other Diseases of Nervous System	M	—
		F	1
B27	Hypertensive Disease	M	1
		F	—
B28	Ischaemic Heart Disease	M	8
		F	7
B29	Other Forms of Heart Disease	M	5
		F	5
B30	Cerebrovascular Disease	M	2
		F	5
B46(6)	Other Diseases of Circulatory System	M	1
		F	—
B31	Influenza	M	—
		F	1
B32	Pneumonia	M	—
		F	1
B33(1)	Bronchitis and Emphysema	M	1
		F	1
B36	Intestinal Obstruction and Hernia	M	1
		F	—
B46(8)	Other Diseases of Digestive System	M	1
		F	—
B38	Nephritis and Nephrosis	M	—
		F	1
B43	Birth Injury, Difficult Labour, etc.	M	1
		F	—
B45	Symptoms and Ill Defined Conditions	M	—
		F	2
TOTAL ALL CAUSES		M	27
		F	31

Average age at death :

IN SEX AND AGE GROUPS.

Under 4 Weeks	4 Weeks and under 1 Year	Age in Years								
		1-4	5-14	15-24	25-34	35-44	45-54	55-64	65-74	75 and Over
—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	1	—	—
—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	1	1
—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	1	—	—
—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	1	1
—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	1	—	—
—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	1
—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	1	—
—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
—	—	—	—	—	1	—	—	—	—	1
—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	1	—
—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
—	—	—	—	—	1	—	—	—	—	—
—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	1	—
—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	1
—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	3	3	2
—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	1	1	5
—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	1	4
—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	5
—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	2	—	—
—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	2	3
—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	1
—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—		1	—
—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	1	—
—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	1	—
—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	1
—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	1	—	—
—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	1
—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	1	—
1	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	2
1	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	9	7	10
—	—	—	—	—	2	—	—	1	9	19

Male 70 years
Female 74 years

INFECTIOUS DISEASES.

The number of cases of notifiable infectious disease during 1970 was the lowest on record. The figures were : -

Scarlet fever	8
Measles	6
Paratyphoid...	1
Infective Jaundice	1

The influenza epidemic which started in December 1969, continued into the early months of 1970. It was very widespread. There was one death from influenza.

Immunisation against rubella is now available for girls between their 11th and 14th birthdays. Rubella (german measles) is a disease which, if contracted during the early months of pregnancy, may lead to deformities in the baby at birth.

Immunisation is now offered as a routine, to all children, against diphtheria, whooping cough, tetanus, smallpox and measles.

Tuberculosis

No new cases were notified during the year. There was one death from pulmonary tuberculosis — a man whose name had been on the register since 1967.

The following cases were on the register at the end of the year : —

	Male	Female
Pulmonary	3	3
Non-pulmonary	--	2

A unit of the Mass Radiography Service visits Bideford (and other towns in the area) every fortnight throughout the year. The general public are free to attend without appointment.

Venereal Disease

There have been no problems regarding venereal disease, and very few cases are encountered. There is a venereal disease clinic in Barnstaple.

MATERNITY, NURSING and OTHER HEALTH SERVICES

The Health Centre provides a base for the area health services. The Health Visitors and the District Nurse/Midwives call there daily, and clinics are held for child health, ante-natal care, sight-testing, chiropody, speech therapy and home help. The District Nurses work in close liason with the family doctors in the area.

MEALS ON WHEELS.

The meals-on-wheels service continued as in previous years. Mid-day meals were served to elderly and needy people in their own homes twice weekly. About 12 elderly folk were served on each occasion.

AMBULANCE SERVICE.

	1970	1969	1968	1967	1966
Patients carried during the year	1,049	843	842	806	810
Total mileage	16,933	16,211	19,054	17,947	16,428

TORRINGTON COTTAGE HOSPITAL.

The work done during the past five years is indicated by the following figures:-

	1970	1969	1968	1967	1966
Patients admitted during the year	234	243	236	216	194
New out-patients	523	386	469	355	299
Total out-patient attendances ...	1,291	923	893	891	817

NATIONAL BLOOD TRANSFUSION SERVICE.

The National Blood Transfusion Service (South Western Division) visited Torrington twice during the year. A total of 231 people gave blood.

	1970	1969	1968	1967	1966
Total donations:—	231	193	181	167	103

FACTORIES ACT, 1961. Part I of the Act.

1—INSPECTIONS for purposes of provisions as to health (including inspections made by Public Health Inspectors)

Premises (1)	Number on Register (2)	Number of: Inspections (3)	Written notices (4)	Occupiers prosecuted (5)
(i) Factories in which Sections 1, 2, 3, 4 and 6 are to be enforced by Local Authorities .. Non-Power	3	1	—	—
(ii) Factories not included in (i) in which Section 7 is enforced by the Local Authority ... ... Power	19	10	—	—
(iii) Other premises in which Section 7 is enforced by the Local Authority (excluding outworkers' premises) ... ... Building sites etc.	1	1	—	—
TOTAL	23	12	NIL	NIL

2—CASES IN WHICH DEFECTS WERE FOUND

Particulars	Number of cases in which defects were found: Found	Remedied	Referred: To H.M. Inspector	By H.M. Inspector	Number of cases in which prosecutions were instituted

Overcrowding (S.2)					
Unreasonable temperature (S.3)...					
Inadequate ventilation (S.4)					
Ineffective drainage of floors (S.6)					
Sanitary Conveniences (S.7)					
(*a*) Insufficient					
(*b*) Unsuitable or defective	1				1
(*c*) Not separate for sexes					
Other offences (not including offences relating to Outwork)					
TOTAL	1	NIL	NIL	NIL	1

OUTWORK—(Sections 133 and 134). Part VIII of the Act.

Nature of Work	Section 133			Section 134		
	No. of out-workers in August list required by Sect. 133 (1) (c)	No. of cases of default in sending lists to the Council	No. of prosecutions for failure to supply lists	No. of instances of work in unwholesome premises	Notices served	Prosecutions
(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)
Wearing apparel, Making, etc.	187	NIL	NIL	NIL	NIL	NIL

RAINFALL.

Details of rainfall during recent years are as follows : —

	1970	1969	1968	1967
January ...	5.93	5.38	3.84	2.78
February ...	5.53	3.13	1.62	4.93
March ...	2.65	3.22	2.99	2.47
April ...	2.76	2.25	2.45	1.32
May ...	1.42	4.90	2.34	4.09
June ...	2.45	1.76	5.37	0.66
July ...	3.35	4.03	4.02	1.90
August ...	3.92	2.60	1.46	2.46
September ...	2.81	2.95	6.74	4.96
October ...	3.06	0.41	3.76	10.28
November ...	7.19	6.28	2.22	3.39
December ...	2.61	4.23	4.62	4.16
Total ...	43.68	41.14	41.43	43.40

Rainfall throughout the year has been average, no particular month has been very wet or very dry.

Records are kept by Mr. C. Bangham at the sewage disposal works.

SEWERAGE AND SEWAGE DISPOSAL.

No major works have been carried out during the year. Messrs. Unigate have installed treatment plant to materially reduce the strength of effluent discharged, thus making it possible for our works to deal with the increased quantity from the additional milk drying plant.

The Council's consultant engineers are preparing details of a scheme to sewer the proposed residential development area on the south east side of the town. Outline approval of the scheme has been given by the Ministry and it is hoped to complete the work in the coming financial year. There has been considerable industrial development in recent years and relatively large numbers of Council houses have been built, but it is essential that private residential building shall keep pace and at present there are virtually no sites available.

WATER SUPPLY.

Water supply to the Borough is generally very good both in quantity and quality. The usual restrictions on the use of hoses were in force during the Summer months. Work on the dam of the reservoir at Meldon is well in hand and it is to be hoped that the completion of that project will ease the supply situation in the North Devon Water Board's area.

20 samples were taken during the year and all bar one gave first class results. Following the receipt of the poor result, a repeat sample from the same source proved first class.

The water is not plumbo-solvent and contains neither fluorine, nor any deleterious substances.

PREVENTION OF DAMAGE BY PESTS ACT 1949.

The Borough Council employ an experienced rodent operator on a part-time basis. Regular inspections of properties are carried out.

No serious infestation has been found and no problems have arisen.

HOUSING.

Perhaps the most significant housing milestone in 1970 was the provision of 12 elderly persons' bungalows at Torridge View with warden supervision. The warden is appointed to answer any emergency call, particularly at night time, (not to act as a "home help"), each bungalow being equipped with an easy to operate warning bell system that communicates with the resident warden. This particular project is unusual in that the warden is the Superintendent of the adjacent Torridge View Welfare Home. We gladly acknowledge the co-operation of the Devon County Council and its officers, especially the Matron and Superintendent, not merely in making this scheme possible with full night and day warden coverage, but in their ready help with details, as for instance the inclusion of the bungalows in the mobile library itinerary and the offer of seats for tenants on the mini-bus service into Torrington from the Home. The success of the scheme impressed the Council sufficiently for a decision to be made later in the year to provide warden supervision also for grouped flats at Rolle Court.

The bungalows built were the first provision for elderly people since 1965 and met a great need. Thirty two other houses and flats were completed, bringing the total to 375. The proportion of council houses to population is exceeded only by two other councils in Devon. The design work, drawing up of specifications, and supervision during the course of construction have been undertaken by the Council's Officers.

During the year no fewer than 36 tenancies out of a total of 76 lettings were provided at the request of local employers for persons moving into the district from some distance outside. These figures provide the answer to the occasional criticism made that the Council has not honoured its undertaking to offer houses to such people at the earliest reasonable opportunity. The Council's policy in this matter has not changed.

INSPECTION OF MEAT AND OTHER FOODS.

Carcases and Offal inspected and condemned in whole or in part.

	Cattle excluding Cows	*Cows*	*Calves*	*Sheep and Lambs*	*Pigs*
Number killed	21,761	5,083	343	144,378	67,994
Number inspected ...	21,761	5,083	343	144,378	67,994
All Diseases except Tuberculosis and Cysticercosis					
Whole carcases condemned	23	86	88	607	145
Carcases of which some part or organ was condemned	13,985	4,738	22	13,646	32,631
Percentage of the number inspected affected with disease other than Tuberculosis and Cysticercosis	64.37	94.90	32.07	9.87	48.20
Tuberculosis					
Whole carcases condemned	—	—	—	—	—
Carcases of which some part or organ was condemned	—	1	—	—	468
Percentage of the number inspected affected with Tuberculosis	—	0.02	—	—	0.69
Cysticercosis					
Carcases of which some part or organ was condemned	24	1	—	—	—
Carcases submitted to treatment by refrigeration	24	1	—	—	—
Generalised and totally condemned	—	—	—	—	—

MEAT INSPECTION

All food animals slaughtered in the district during the year were inspected by the meat inspection staff.

The throughput at the large private abattoir increased over that of 1969, and continues to rise. The large new "boning room" at the abattoir is now in full operation, which means that a large number of cows are slaughtered for "manufacturing meat" i.e. processing and canning, etc.

The total weight of Meat condemned during the year was as follows:—

DESCRIPTION	Tons	Cwts.	Qrs.	Lbs.
Carcase Meat (Including the Whole Carcases of 86 Cows, 23 Other Cattle, 88 Calves, 607 Sheep, and 145 Pigs.)	43	12	2	19
OFFAL	153	2	3	4

CONDEMNED FOODSTUFFS.

Only two condemnations were made; one 11lb. 11oz. tin of Cooked Ham which was blown and 3lbs. of Green Collar Bacon.

THE OFFICES, SHOPS & RAILWAY PREMISES ACT, 1963.

Appendix I—Prescribed Statistical Information

TABLE A—REGISTRATIONS AND GENERAL INSPECTIONS

Class of Premises (1)	Number of premises registered during the year (2)	Total number of registered premises at end of year (3)	Number of registered premises receiving a general inspection during the year (4)
Offices	3	9	1
Retail Shops	2	24	2
Wholesale Shops, Warehouses	—	—	—
Catering Establishments open to the public, canteens	1	2	1
Fuel Storage Depots	—	—	—
TOTALS	6	35	4

TABLE B—NUMBER OF VISITS OF ALL KINDS BY INSPECTORS TO REGISTERED PREMISES

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TABLE C—ANALYSIS OF PERSONS EMPLOYED IN REGISTERED PREMISES BY WORKPLACE

Class of Workplace (1)	Number of Persons Employed (2)
Offices	44
Retails Shops	80
Wholesale Departments, Warehouses	1
Catering Establishments open to the public	11
Canteens	—
Fuel Storage Depots	—
TOTAL	136
TOTAL MALES	73
TOTAL FEMALES	63

SUMMARY OF VISITS AND INSPECTIONS MADE DURING THE YEAR.

Allotments and Fields	8
Building Regulations and Planning Matters ...	99
Caravan Sites	3
Cattle and Pannier Markets	27
Cemetery and Churchyard	67
Disinfection & Disinfestation	9
Drain Testing and Inspecting	33
Factories	11
Food Premises and Food Inspection	26
Housing	928
Improvement Grants	126
Industrial Development	24
Meat Inspection	48
Miscellaneous	53
New Building Work	66
Nuisances (including obstructed drains) ...	39
Offices, Shops & Railway Premises Act ...	11
Petroleum Licensing and Storage	3
Playing Field, Bowling Green etc.	51
Public Conveniences	10
Refuse Collection and Disposal	35
Rodent Control	1
Sewerage and Sewage Disposal	123
Street Lighting	19
Water	8
Total	1,828

ALAN FREY Printer, Torrington.